

## [Miss Nancy Stewart]

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Life History

[Williams E. Smith?]

[?] City Guide

[Pioneer Resident.?]

[Writers' Project?]

[District #6?]

[? Texas] [Civil?] [War?] & [work in an orphanage?]

[?]

Nov [23?] 1938

[?]

[Life story of?]

[???, STATE ORPHANS HOME.?]

"I was born [September 27,?] [?], [in ???], [?], [??] [won't be long until?] my [90th, birthday?]. Mr. [O'daniel?] [??] dinner with me [?] my 100th. birthday, and [we?] will have [???], [and I only live to see that day?].

"There were eight of us children and a happy hard working group we were too. I [can?] [remember?] [the Civil War vividly?], [more so than I can remember?] things that happened

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only a few?] [days age. The day we heard?] [??] was elected president, [I threw my bonnet in the air?] [and hollered 'Hurrah.' There won't be?] [?] [president like George Washington and Abe Lincoln?]. [We were on the northern side but there was people who lived close to us that owned slaves?]. [Some were good to them and some treated them awful. I remember one man that owned salves?], [told an old negro man if he would pick so many pounds of cotton one day he would give him a?] [dollar. I don't remember how much it was, but it was a pretty good amount. Well the old negro?] [worked very hard and picked a few pounds over the?] [??], [and the white man?] [?] [only would'nt?] [give him his dollar but told him?] [??????] [every day. I have seen negro?] [women put on a block and sold away from their children. A good negro woman brought lots of?] [money in them days?].

“[One day we were close to?] [??], [about 12 miles I think. We could hear the?] [little guns, they were just pop, pop, pop, just like?] [?], [and?] [??] [in?] [?] [the?] [?] [of the?] [?].” [??] [free?] [??????] [days. “Them were?] [terrible times, all the man and boys that were large enough to were called into service, and it?] [was surly hard on we womenfolks?]. Theives would come [around?] [??] everything they wanted. One time they came and took all our bedding, and even tore up the floor to see if we had [anything?] hid under the floor. They cut one old mans ears off, that lived near us, and another [old gentleman that lived close by, the made?] [?] [get down on his hands an knees and?] [spurred?] him just like a horse. Those were terrible days. We had another [neighbor?] [that had three boys?] that were too small to go to war, the rebels came and shot them down like dogs just because 2 they were too young to fight?]. [I?] went to their funeral, on of the saddest funerals I ever attended. Those boy's little sister just went from one coffin to another [?] [again I say those?] [were terrible days?].

“[My brother was captured in the battle of Corinth, he was fighting on the northern?] [side and when he was captured on the southern side he was place in a prison in Virginia, and?] [he starved to death there. The northers?] [?] [would send food through to be fed to the northern?] [men in the prisons, but they never did get any of it. He lived in the prison

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until the?) [war ended and my father went to get him, but he was in such a [weakened?] [condition that lived?] [only a few months?].

“[The war left us with?] [??,??] [father decided to move to Texas. He?] [had a brother in Arkansas?], [so we?] [stopped over there and stayed two years?]. [We?] [made the by?] [train and when we left Arkansas?] [??] [to Texas?], [??] [to?] [?] [about 52 or 53 years?] [ago?].

“[?] [looked quite differenent them, not a single sidewalk, now even a board?] [walk. There were no?] [?] [here at all, when we went to church it was in the old Opera?] [house?].

“[?] [went to a fair of some kind right after we came here, and then we met Judge?] [Stout. We rented a place from him. I do not remember anything about the fair, but it must?] [have been the first fair after the war?].

“[I never went anywhere much and I can't tell you very much of early happenings?]. [I always had work to do, and I never ran around any. I have?] [?] [all my life and I never?] [have had a vacation?]

“[The Orphans Home was built?] [????????]. [I saw the land?] [broke and made ready for the?] [first two buildings?] [I said that as the buildings were?] [finished I was going to try and get a job?], [But I didn't have do do that as they sent for me?]. [I want to work before there was a?] [????] [the superintendent and his wife?]. [I began doing the cooking, washing and cleaning. “First I was cook, then I was teacher, and 3 later a nurse- and some of the time I was all three. “We didn't have much help in those days?].” [We had only two buildings, one was for classrooms and the other was a doractory. They were?] [brick and were set out in a field that could get very muddy with the least bit of rain. There?] [was no modern conveniences like they have now, no running water or steam heat?].

[The first two orphans to be provided for by the State of Texas came to her in 1880?].  
[The first child was Jim McDonald, the second was George Elliott. Jim was adopted by

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a family?] from [Maladoff?]. [He?] is an old man now with grandchildren, but he hadn't forgotten me as he came to see me the other day and brought me a bucket of honey. Bless their hearts! I have children all over Texas. I got Mothers Day, Christmas, and Birthday cards from everywhere. I treasure each one of them. They were all my kids, and I love them all, I [never?] [did?] [mistreat?] any of them, I was the only mother they know and?] [?????]. [??] [came to?] [me when they were hurt or in trouble?], [although?] [???] [I only had?] [charge?] of the little ones. When [?] first went to work [???] [me a group of little?] [children to take care of as soon as there was enough children, and he did this too?].

[The most trying days were during the epidemic. "It was measles and mumps and mumps?] and measles, but I was prepared as I had everything that could be caught when I was a child in Tennessee. I had to sleep in the room with the children as some of them were continually having measles,mumps, whooping cough and such things. Once when so many were having whooping cough, I had to pick up the little ones and put them in the bed with me so [I?] could raise they up when they started coughing so they would not strangle.

"I bathed the children twice a week, we didn't have?] [?] [in those days and bath?] [water came up on the end of a rope. When the bath tub is a number three laundry tub, well?], [it wasn't very pleasant. Later the?] [?] [had a?] [?], and still later an?] [?] well. I [didn't trust the children to get clean, I bathed each one myself, and it was a good half-days?] [work-by the time I got the last on bathed the first ones would all be dirty again. [Oh! it?] was hard work, but I enjoyed every minute of it. [??????] [four o'clock and?] had breakfast by six for eighty-five children, Don't as me how I got biscuits baked, I just don't know. I often think about how much work I had to do all by myself and wonder how I ever did get through, but I managed to some way. Some had to have breakfast from a bottle 4 [and some had to be fed with a spoon. I had big wood cookstove to do all the cooking on?]. [?] [had to draw every drop of water that we used, and that was no joke either. Today they

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have?] [modern gas stoves, water in the kitchen, and all the conveniences that makes it easier taking?] [care of big bunch?].

“[Some of the children would cry when they were left there, but they soon get use to?] [playing with the other childrens. There was one little girl four years old that lived in the?] [home. Her mother was living and would often come to spend the day with her. One day she came?] [for the day and after dinner the mother came to me and said, “Miss Nan, do you know what Martha?] [said to me a minute ago? She said she wished I would go home, so she could go out to play with?] [the rest of the kids?] [?] [you see the children soon got?] [?] [away from the outside?].

“[One day a man and woman came?] [?????????] [stated before?] he was the first child to come the home. He was four years old then and I adored him. I trimmed his hair and cleaned him up and got him all ready and he turned to me and said, 'I don't want to go, I loves you and I want to stay here with you.' I told him he would have lots of little pigs, calves and chickens and things that he could play with. As I said he is now a grandfather and still lives in [?].”

There was a baby nine months old brought there, him name was Herman Miles. I tended [to him all the ime time and he was a very sweet child. I took care of him until he was large enough to go to the boy's ward, and later he was adopted. I never knew exactly what became of him, so not long ago a big car stopped at the curb, and a man came to the door and knocked. I went to the door and there stood a big man, well dressed who asked me if I knew him, and I told him no. I didn't think that I did, and he asked me if I remembered Herman Miles. Well, I was so happy that [I?] just threw my arms around his neck. He is a banker in Tyler and he and his wife and children visit me often.

[My father was ill one time and?] [???????], [and while I was?] away from the home, a baby boy had been left there by on of the [????] from Dallas, the [?] that operate the big department store. [??] that [worked?] in their home had died and left this baby so they

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brought him to the Orphans Home. When I returned to work the baby cried after me 5 and I took extra care of him. When he was large enough to work he followed me everywhere. [I?] finally had to quit work, as my father's [??????] [decided to take him home with?] me to raise. His name was Willis [??????] [a better boy. I sent him to school?] and as soon as he was large enough he began to work and help me. I made one big mistake, I never did adopt him legally, and he passed away suddenly when he was 30 years old, he left [\$1000?]. in the bank, but the state took that and I only had his insurance policy. When he died all the happiness I ever had in my life went with him, never was there a better son than he, and my life has been very sad since his going.

I worked in the home for 30 years. The last few years I had a little cottage all to myself and it was very comfortable and nice. But my father's health get so bad that I had to come home to take care of him. He has passed away and I am the only one left, I have my little home here [I?] bought 30 years ago.

On the 11th of October this year [?] [Lee O'Daniel addressed the Dirt Farmers of?] [?] county. On Sunday October 9th, I made the remark to a friend. 'That if I was able to walk, I would station myself in the Navarro [?????] O'Daniel to come in, I wanted to see him just one time.'

So the day he made [?????????] [and the?] Superintendent told him I was the first person to work there and Mr. O'Daniel took the time out to come by to see me. When I went to the door all he said was, 'Miss Nan, I am W. Lee O'Daniel.' That was the biggest thrill of my life. I led him back into my bedroom, and showed him his picture and asked him if he knew that man. He pointed to a collar on the shirt of this boyhead picture, and said he could remember well, the day his mother pinned that on his shirt. He told me he heard that I made the first biscuits that was made in the home, he said he knew that the biscuits were good, but he was sorry that I didn't have Hill Billy flour because he knew they would have been much better. He had a nice talk and I enjoyed it very much. I have met several Governors while at the home, but meeting O'Daniel was the grandest thrill of all. 6 I get

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up every morning at 6 o'clock to hear the news. Of all the modern things we have I like the radio best. I listen to all the news and to all the W. Lee O'Daniel programs. I think he is a man sent from God to lead Texas out of the situation it is now in. I like to hear good sermons and good singing, especially the [?] program. I don't care for the love plays, they don't interest me at all. On Sunday not ago I was here all alone and was very lonesome, so I turned on the radio and as the program came on the air, a man was singing 'God Will Take Care of You.' It just seemed it was meant exactly for me. I know God has blessed me all these years. I have never been sick in bed a week in my life have never gone to a picture show and have no disire to. I do my little housework and that takes up the mornings, and after dinner I always lay down to rest awhile. My life has been spent in service for other and never has anyone asked me for a favor, that I was able to give then that it wasn't granted, and I always did it willingly. So all my 90 years have been happy ones.

End.